

NEWS RELEASE

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Medicaid Transportation Provider Sentenced for Fraud

Springfield, Illinois -- Rodger A. Heaton, United States Attorney for the Central District of Illinois, announced that a Sherrie P. Renken, age 41, of Streator, Illinois was sentenced today for her involvement in a scheme to defraud the Medicaid program in the State of Illinois. She was charged in November of 2004 with 12 counts of mail fraud, three counts of submitting false claims to the government, and one count of submitting false documents stemming from the operation of "Renken Transportation Services," which Renken operated from her home in Streator. She entered pleas of guilty to two of the fraud charges in August of 2005.

The indictment alleged, and Renken admitted that she engaged in a scheme to defraud the Illinois Department of Public Aid (IDPA), which administers the Medicaid program, by submitting claims for services not rendered and not rendered to the extent billed. From October 1997 to March 2002, Renken, who operated a business which provided transportation of qualified individuals to medical providers, devised a scheme to defraud Medicaid in that she submitted claims to IDPA, and established policies and procedures wherein others submitted claims, for: trips not taken; billing for mileage when the IDPA recipient was not in the vehicle; billing for mileage well in excess of that actually driven; billing for use of a Medicar when, in fact, no Medicar was used; and, billing for attendants when, in fact, no such attendant was necessary or present for the transports.

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Renken was sentenced to serve 18 months in Federal Prison, to serve 3 years supervised release following that sentenced and to pay \$150,104.13 in restitution by U. S. District Judge Jeanne Scott. This figure represents \$130,883.40 over billed for miles billed that were not driven, or not driven with the patient in the vehicle, \$7,427.00 in payments for “attendants” that were not provided, and \$11, 793.73 for trips that had been cancelled or no medical service provided to the patient, yet billed as is it had. Renken will report to prison on February 6, 2006.

The investigation was conducted by the Central Illinois Health Care Fraud Task Force which includes agents of the Illinois State Police Medicaid Fraud Control Bureau, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Illinois Attorney General’s Office, the U.S. Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and the Illinois Department of Public Aid. Assistant U.S. Attorney Patrick D. Hansen is prosecuting the case along with Assistant Attorney General Bradley K. Hart, assigned as a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney.

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